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## **What Drives Individual Participation in Mass Protests? Grievance Politicization, Recruitment Networks and Street Demonstrations in Romania**

*Marius Ioan TĂȚAR*

**Abstract.** Participation in street demonstrations has become a key form of political action used by citizens to make their voice heard in the political process. Since mass protests can disrupt political agendas and bring about substantial policy change, it is important to understand who the protesters are, what motivates them to participate and how are they (de)mobilized. This article develops a two-stage model for examining patterns of protest mobilization in Romania. Using multivariate analysis of survey data, this article shows that grievances, biographical availability, social networks, and political engagement variables have different weight in explaining willingness to demonstrate on the one hand, and actual participation in street protests, on the other hand. The findings suggest that protest potential is primarily driven by selective processes of grievance politicization, while recruitment networks and organizational ties seem to play a key role in moving people from willingness to demonstrate to actual protest participation.

**Keywords:** *protest, participation, demonstration, mobilization, politicization, grievances, recruitment, Romania*

### **Introduction**

An increasing number of studies view protest participation as a key element of a wider repertoire of political actions through which citizens can voice their discontent within the political process (Kostelka and Rovny 2019; Grasso and Giugni 2016; Aytaç and Stokes 2019). Protest behavior can take many forms ranging from signing petitions, attending strikes or street demonstrations, boycotting, occupying buildings and other public spaces, or joining in more violent political activities. However, participation in street demonstrations is often viewed as the “prototypical protest activity of citizens today”, at least in Western societies (Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and Walgrave 2018, p. 371). According to Stekelenburg et al (2018), since the onset of the 2008-2009 economic crisis, not only did contention spike to

the level of the 1960s, but also anti-government demonstrations have become by far the most employed repertoire of contention, used by citizens to demand political changes and express indignation. Thus, the prominence of anti-government demonstrations mainly emerged in a period marked by harsh economic conditions. In this context, people attributed much of the responsibility for the economic crisis and the inability to manage it to political corruption that was essentially perceived as a corruption of democracy (della Porta, 2015). Eastern Europe has also experienced significant economic contraction during the crisis (Bartlett & Monastiriotis, 2010; Connolly, 2012) and this in turn has altered the patterns of political activism in the region (Cisar & Navratil, 2015). While the post-communist transitions of these countries have been characterized by relative quiescence (Vanhuysse, 2006), protests during and after the economic crisis of 2008-2009 seem to contradict previous patterns of political apathy, since dashed expectations about improving living standards came with increased political discontent (Breissinger & Sasse, 2014).

This article analyzes Romania as a case that thoroughly illustrates these regional patterns: after a relatively long period of political apathy, a revival of citizen activism was recorded during the economic crisis. Massive demonstrations erupted in January 2012 in most major Romanian cities triggered by the introduction of new healthcare reform legislation. In February 2012, protests have eventually led to the resignation of the center-right government that has adopted harsh austerity measures in 2010. The 2012 protests were particularly important since they appear to have had a 'demonstration-effect' for a series of noteworthy episodes of contention, recurrently erupting in Romania in recent years. Thus, a new taste for protest actions seems to have emerged in Romania after the 2012 demonstrations (Tătar, 2015b). Since then, people became increasingly eager to challenge political elites on various grounds, ranging from governmental inefficiency and corruption to environmental issues (Ana, 2017; Mărgărit, 2016; Vesalon & Crețan, 2015). Because recent episodes of contention had notable impact in repeatedly curbing certain public policies, influencing election results and dismissing governments (Tătar, 2015b), it is important to know who the protesters are and how do they mobilize for collective action.

Thus, the article focuses on understanding individuals' mobilization to mass demonstrations in Romania. The underlying assumption is that protest mobilization is as a multi-stage process (Shultziner and Goldberg, 2019) that in this article entails

two steps: *first, transforming grievances into willingness or readiness to protest and second, converting willingness to demonstrate into actual participation in demonstrations*. Various categories of factors such as relative deprivation, biographical availability, social networks and motivational attitudes are expected to play different roles at each mass mobilization stage. Using survey data collected in Romania in 2012 as part of the sixth wave of the World Values Survey (2010-2014), the study develops a typology of demonstrators/non-demonstrators that sorts people into four mutually exclusive categories, based on their position in the protest mobilization processes: *non-demonstrators* (those who said they would never demonstrate); *potential demonstrators* (those willing to demonstrate but who have not attended street protests yet); *previous demonstrators* (participants in street demonstrations before 2012, but who have not joined the 2012 demonstrations); *participants in the 2012 demonstrations* (those who were active in the 2012 protests, but who might have also attended demonstrations in the past). Comparing the features of these four categories, will pinpoint the role of various categories of factors at each stage of the protest mobilization process.

The rest of this article is structured into 6 parts. The first part contextualizes protest participation trends in Romania. The second part provides a literature review on individual level determinants of protest participation. The third section discusses research design, methods and data used in statistical analyses. The next section employs multinomial logistic regression to contrast the profile of these four types of demonstrators/non-demonstrators. To trace the drivers of protest mobilization, I first compare the characteristics of non-demonstrators with the features of potential demonstrators. Then, I contrast the profile of potential and actual demonstrators. The last two sections discuss the main findings and the contributions to the broader academic literature on political participation and social movements.

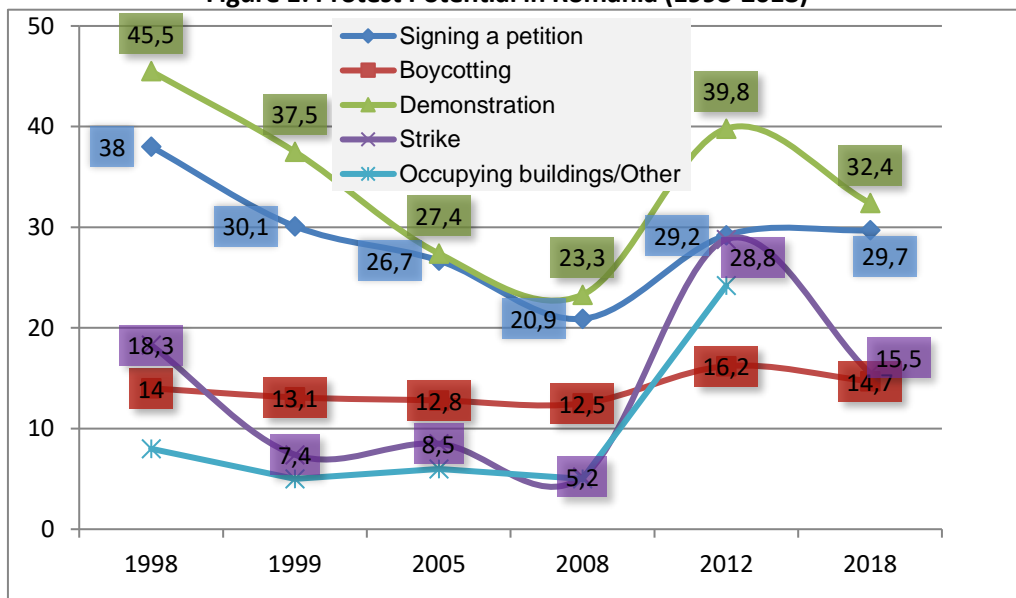
### **Trends of protest politics in Romania**

In general, Romania typifies regional patterns of the relative political apathy of post-communist citizens from Eastern Europe (Tătar, 2019). Economic hardships during the transition period, low living standards, increased uncertainties and risks of everyday life came along with mistrust in the new democratic institutions and the political class in general (Tătar, 2016). In this context, widespread estrangement from politics and public sphere and a general decline of both electoral and protest

participation define citizen participation in post-communist Romania. This trend can be illustrated by the availability of Romanians to protest and their actual participation in protest actions, which both have substantially decreased during 1998-2008 (see Figures 1 and 2).

At the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, the majority of Romanians were less involved in politics (for instance, turnout in the 2008 parliamentary elections was only 39.2%). Thus, the upsurge of citizen activism during the Great Recession emerged after a relatively long period of political apathy. This shifting trend is revealed by the significant rise of protest potential measured here by the availability to protest during the economic crisis (see figure 1): willingness to demonstrate increased from 23% in 2008 to almost 40% in 2012, readiness to strike rose from 5% to 29%, while the proportion of potential petitioners increased from 21% to 29%. It is noteworthy that the share of Romanians willing to protest in 2012 has reached similar levels to those documented at the end of the 1990s when the country also went through a difficult economic crisis. Moreover, levels of satisfaction with life and personal income, as well as the magnitude of social pessimism recorded during the recent crisis also resemble those registered at the end of the first post-communist decade (Mărginean et al., 2010).

**Figure 1: Protest Potential in Romania (1998-2018)**



*Data source:* Author's own elaboration based on EVS, 1999, 2008, 2018; WVS 1998, 2005, 2012, 2017/2018. Data represent % of those who declared they 'might do' each of these forms of political action.

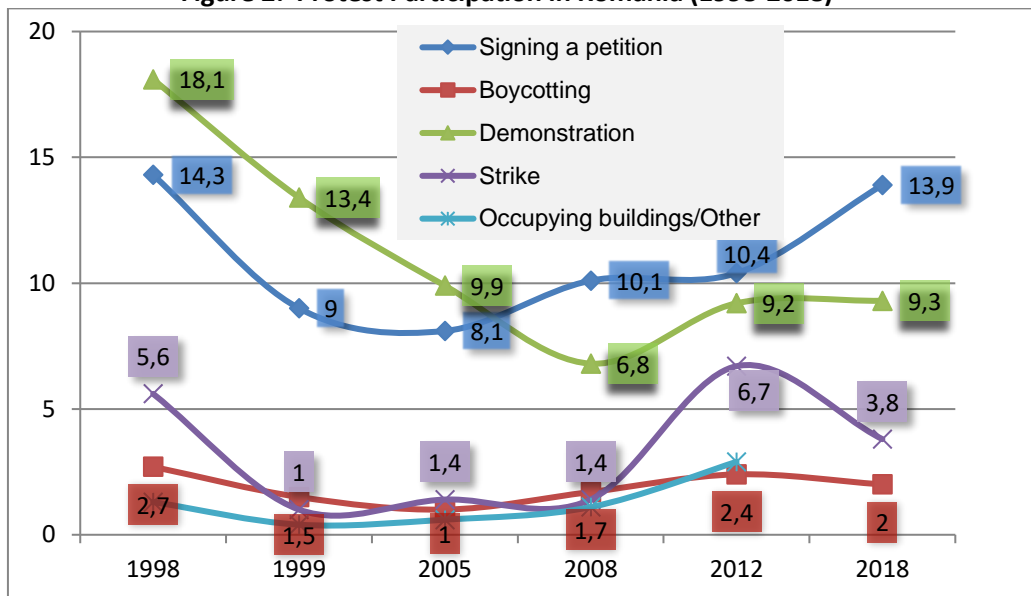
The significant increase of protest potential on virtually all forms of political action (see Figure 1) seems to result from growing popular discontent with socioeconomic and political developments in Romania, during the economic crisis. With a GDP per capita of only 45% of the EU average, Romania ranks second last in the EU in terms of economic development. According to Eurostat data, the GDP of Romania contracted in 2009 by 6.3% and continued to decline by 1.7% in 2010, a year in which the Romanian government adopted harsh austerity measures: public sector wages were cut by 25%, VAT increased from 19% to 24%, the payment of overtime hours in the public sector was eliminated as well as other employment benefits, several subsidies were reduced and some social protection benefits were cut. Austerity in spending impinged on various public services such as education, welfare and healthcare and thus affected large segments of the population. People from various social standings felt increasingly insecure and vulnerable.

However, as Stoica and Mihăilescu (2012) suggest these macroeconomic determinants are not enough to generate and explain public perceptions and reactions to austerity policies adopted in Romania during the economic crisis. Other factors including political instability and poor functioning of institutions are equally important. All along the post-communist transition, as well as during the economic crisis, the vast majority of Romanians negatively assessed the way the country was governed (Mărginean, et al., 2010). While institutional trust has been traditionally low in post-communist Romania, further decline of confidence in key institutions of representative democracy came along after the adoption of austerity measures in May 2010. At that time, only 10% of Romanians trusted their national parliament and only 12% their national government, compared to a European average of 31% and 29% respectively (European Commission, 2012).

These developments place the Romanian case into broader transnational patterns suggesting that the austerity measures adopted during the economic crisis have exacerbated previously existing trends of mistrust in representative institutions of democracy. As highlighted by della Porta (2015), the economic crisis has fuelled a legitimacy crisis which took the form of a crisis of political responsibility. She points out how neoliberal policies of liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation reduce state capacity to respond to citizens' expectations, while the growing role of international organisations has substantially limited the sovereignty of states. Political responsiveness to citizens' demands and needs has been further hindered

by an increased collusion between politicians and business. The effect was a growing mistrust in representative institutions shared not only by protest movement activists, but also by the citizenry at large (della Porta, 2015). Despite different background conditions, della Porta (2015) notes similarities in recent protest episodes in various countries and links them to shifts in neoliberal capitalism and its effects on society. Thus, in many places protesters have criticised the functioning of representative democracy for serving only the interests of the elites, a perceived '1%' who held political and economic power, contrasted with the wide majority of citizens, the '99%'.

**Figure 2: Protest Participation in Romania (1998-2018)**



Data source: Author's own elaboration based on EVS, 1999, 2008, 2018; WVS 1998, 2005, 2012, 2017/2018. Data represent % of those who declared they 'have done' each of these forms of political action.

Various precipitating events tipped the balance in favor of mass protests during the economic crisis. In Romania, such triggering factors occurred at the end of 2011 when the Government aimed to postpone the 2012 local elections and to introduce a new healthcare reform bill that would have reduced state funded health benefits and privatized Romanian hospitals and the medical emergency system. People perceived this new healthcare bill as a direct threat to their lives, since fear of illness is one of the prominent concerns of the population, particularly the elderly (Sandu, 2012). Massive demonstrations erupted in January 2012 in most major cities

after the President of Romania advocated this new healthcare bill during a live TV talk-show. After weeks of street demonstrations, protests have eventually led in February 2012 to the resignation of the center-right government that has adopted the austerity measures in 2010. Other protests started in the spring of 2012 against shale gas drilling projects, while the summer of 2012 has witnessed further street demonstrations, making 2012 one of the richest years in protest events in the last decades.

The reservoir of potential protest significantly increased during the economic crisis in Romania and so did the share of actual protesters. For instance, both attending street demonstrations and joining in strikes recorded substantial growth between 2008 and 2012 (see Figure 2). Overall, the percentage of Romanians who have participated in at least one of the five protest activities presented in figure 2 has increased from 14.7% in 2008 to almost 19% in 2012<sup>1</sup>. However, comparing data in figures 1 and 2 reveals a more spectacular increase in protest potential than actual protest participation. This suggests that among those willing to protest only some proportion ended up participating in collective action. As noted by Klandermans (2004), protest mobilization is usually a lengthy multi-stage process. With each step smaller or larger numbers of potential protestors drop out for various reasons. Borrowing the 'demand and supply' metaphor from economics, Klandermans (2004, pp. 360-369) claims that successful mobilization gradually brings 'demand' that is the protest potential in a society together with 'supply' that refers to the opportunities to protest staged by protest organizers and mobilization networks. Following Klandermans (2004), as well as Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) we view protest mobilization as a multi-stage process and analytically disentangled it into protest potential and actual participation in protests. Comparing the determinants of protest potential and participation might provide useful insights into what were the individual level drivers of the 2012 protest mobilizations.

### **Who demonstrates? Theorizing individual determinants of protest participation**

The question as to why people engage in political protests has generated a lot of interest among scholars coming from various disciplines such as political science, sociology, political economy, social psychology, and history. Depending on

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<sup>1</sup> The difference between the proportions of protesters in 2012 and 2008 is statistically significant according to a Z test: Z-score is 3.1658, significant at  $p < 0.01$ .



their academic background, various researchers stress the importance of some explanatory factors over others. While the methods of inquiry and terminology greatly vary among different branches of social sciences (Schussman & Soule, 2005), individual or micro-level explanations of protest behaviour fall into four broad categories: grievance theory, resource theory and biographical availability, mobilisation networks and organisational ties, and cultural-motivational theories.

### ***Relative deprivation and grievances***

Classical theorists of contestation politics argue that people engage in protests to express their grievances coming from relative deprivation, frustration, moral indignation or perceived injustice (Berkowitz, 1972; Gurr, 1970; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Grievances have different sources. First, relative deprivation and social justice theories emphasize perceptions of illegitimate inequality as the main factors leading to grievances. Second, what might explain the explosive onset of some protests are suddenly imposed grievances that refer to an unexpected threat or inroad upon people's rights or circumstances (Walsh, 1981 cited in Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Suddenly imposed grievances are particularly strong predictors of protest participation when people perceive certain political decisions as directly threatening their life or social position. Third, when people perceive that important values or principles are violated, grievances are expressed in the form of moral outrage (Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). Moreover, social psychologists claim that people care more about how they are treated than about the fairness of outcomes (Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) that is, procedural justice might be a more influential predictor of protest participation than distributive justice (Tyler & Smith, 1998).

The economic crisis of 2008-09 as well as the accompanying austerity and deterioration of public services had widespread detrimental effects on individuals' life (della Porta, 2015). Given the suddenness with which grievances were imposed it is expected that factors related to perceptions of economic and social deprivation should play a key role in explaining protest engagement (Rüdiger & Karyotis, 2014). Scholars often point to a new class, 'the precariat', including young, unemployed or only part-time employed and often well-educated persons, that emerged as the main actor of anti-austerity protests (della Porta, 2015, p. 17). We use several indicators to capture the relative deprivation felt by individuals during the economic crisis, particularly in connection with rising unemployment, pessimism about future

developments and declining purchasing power. Therefore, one could hypothesize *that persons dissatisfied with their household financial situation and those who are in a precarious position being worried about losing their job or not finding a job are more prone to protest in times of crisis*. In line with procedural justice theories, injustice and abuses of power are expected to strengthen the influence of grievances in explaining protest during the economic crisis. Therefore, we expect *that persons who perceive that the government violates their rights by wiretapping or reading personal mail or email will be more likely to attend street demonstrations*.

### ***Biographical availability and strategic resources***

While the conclusion of relative deprivation theories is that at the heart of every protest are grievances (Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013), not all aggrieved people protest. Only when additional factors come into play do grievances result into actual protest (Rucht, 2007). Research of political engagement often focuses on individuals' resources that may facilitate political action (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Education is viewed as one of the strongest resource predictors of both conventional and protest participation because it provides cognitive and civic awareness which help citizens better understand politics (Norris, 2002). The main thesis of the resource model is that people with higher economic status - higher education, higher incomes, and better occupational positions - are more active in politics. Some resource variables, such as age, gender, education, marital and employment statuses and caring for children, have been grouped under the label of 'biographical availability' for protest involvement (Rüdiger & Karyotis, 2014, p. 495). Since certain forms of protest behaviour such as attending street demonstrations involve some physical activity risks as well as time availability, *it is expected that men, respectively younger people that lack obligations linked to family or occupation to be more prone to participate*. As more demonstrations are commonly organised in large cities *it is likely that individuals' place of residence influences their propensity to protest, even after controlling for the effect of other factors*.

### ***Political engagement and motivations***

By disentangling protest participation into a two-stage mobilisation process, Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) demonstrate that biographical availability affects individuals' willingness to protest but it does not turn protest potential into actual

protest involvement. Therefore, in addition to civic skills and biographical resources other factors, such as motivation, are also necessary for individuals to become active in protest politics. For instance, some individuals might have an *instrumental motivation* to protest in order to promote or defend their interests by achieving some collective goals (general incentives) or individual benefits (selective incentives). On the other hand, those who mainly want to affirm their political views may protest based on *expressive or ideological considerations* (Klandermans, 2004). *In times of austerity it is expected that people having leftist orientations to be more active in protests* (Peterson et al., 2015). In terms of motivational determinants of protest involvement, it is relevant to distinguish, as Ruding and Karyotis (2014, p. 488) have emphasized, whether protests during the economic crisis are reflective of 'new' or 'old' politics. More specifically, are these protests a continuation of *new social movements* expressing post-materialist values and concerns for issues such as the environment or peace, or do they represent a return to *old materialist movements*, which have been mobilised by traditional organisations such as trade unions or political parties? Beside post-materialist orientations, other prominent attitudes and values mentioned in the political behaviour literature (Quintelier & van Deth, 2014; Schussman & Soule, 2005; Smith, 2009) as being associated with political actions include: political interest, support for democracy as a system of government, as well as trust in the political institutions of representative democracy. The availability of leftist parties in parliament can also stimulate cognitive mobilisation, since protesters can find allies to support their issues (Tarrow, 2012), in the context of anti-austerity demonstrations.

### ***Mobilisation networks and organisational ties***

On the other hand, since most protest events are not spontaneous and solitary acts, but organised collective actions (Fillieule, 1997), protest involvement also requires mobilisation opportunities. Therefore, both the propensity to protest and the repertoire of protest actions is highly contingent on a person's belonging to various social networks and organisations that create the availability of collective action opportunities. Furthermore, as Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2013) argue, individual grievances and feelings of frustration are transformed into group-based grievances and emotions within social networks. Moreover, the effect of embeddedness into social networks on the propensity to participate in politics depends on the amount of political discussion that occurs in these networks and the

information people are able to gather about politics (McClurg, 2003). In addition, individuals' centrality position in online social networks is associated with a higher propensity to engage in political discussions (Miller, Bobkowski, Maliniak, & Rapoport, 2015). In the case of younger age cohorts online and offline political activism significantly correlate (Hirzalla & Zoonen, 2011). In brief, social networks function as communication channels in which discursive processes take place to form consensus that makes up the symbolic resources in collective sense-making (Gamson, 1992; Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013). Thus, social networks can contribute to the mobilisation of colleagues, neighbours, friends, or relatives in the political process. On the other hand, organisational approaches emphasize the mobilising role of political parties, unions, and voluntary associations in activating political engagement, creating protest opportunities and asking people to participate (Schussman & Soule, 2005). Previous involvement in protests might socialize people into specific forms of collective action increasing their chances to engage in such behaviour in the future (Rüdiger & Karyotis, 2014).

### **Research design, data and methods**

The empirical analysis in this article is based on survey data collected in Romania in 2012 as part of the sixth wave of the World Values Survey (WVS, 2015). WVS was chosen because it comprised a wide range of indicators of both protest behaviour and its potential predictors. Moreover, WVS data are comparable over time offering the opportunity to illustrate trends of political action before, during, and after the economic crisis. Without focusing on a specific protest movement, the goal of this article is to distinguish between the characteristics of various types of demonstrators and non-demonstrators in order to understand who protested and who did not in the context of harsh economic conditions in Romania.

The Romanian WVS 2012 dataset comprises 1503 respondents and is representative for the Romanian adult population. The questionnaire included five items on protest actions: signing petitions, joining in boycotts, attending peaceful demonstrations, joining in strikes and any other act of protest. The interviewers asked respondents whether they 'have done', 'might do' or 'would never do' any of these political actions (WVS, 2015). For those who said they 'have done' the given activity, a second question was asked about how often they have done it in the last year: 'not at all, once, twice, three times, more than three times' (WVS, 2015). Since fieldwork was

carried out at the end of 2012, this second question broadly covers protest activities done in 2012, a year marked by the revival of mass demonstrations in Romania, after a decade of relative political apathy. Although street demonstrations were not the only form of political protests, they were allegedly the prominent type of protest actions in 2012. For this reason, the analysis focuses on demonstrators which emerged as the most visible and increasing segment of protesters (Fillieule & Tartakowsky, 2013) particularly during the economic crisis (della Porta, 2015). Thus, one may reasonably expect that any new patterns of protest politics that might have developed in times of crisis should be noticeable first of all in this group of protesters. Nevertheless, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, not only actual participation in demonstrations has increased in the aftermath of the economic crisis, but also the pool of potential demonstrators. Therefore, we should also pay attention to the factors that influence individuals' willingness to demonstrate.

In order to trace the drivers of mass demonstrations during the economic crisis we adapt Beyerlein and Hipp's (2006) approach and treat protest mobilisations as a two stage process: willingness to attend protest demonstrations and conversion of willingness into actual participation in demonstrations. Using a differential approach to protest mobilisation allows for comparisons between *non-demonstrators* (i.e. those who said they would never demonstrate), *potential demonstrators* (i.e. those willing to demonstrate, but have not done it yet) and *actual demonstrators* (i.e. those who have demonstrated). Moreover, since the WVS questionnaire also asks about participation in more recent demonstrations in the last year (that is 2012) one can further break the category of *actual protesters* into *previous demonstrators* (those who attended demonstrations in the past, but were inactive in 2012) and the *2012 demonstrators* (those who might have attended demonstrations in the past, but were also active in the 2012 demonstrations). By comparing the socio-political profile of the *previous protesters* and the *2012 protesters* we particularly seek to understand the determinants of participation in the massive demonstrations that erupted in Romania during the economic crisis and the routes to protest mobilisation in this period. Thus I constructed a typology of protestors which serves as the dependent variable in the following multinomial logistic regression analyses and has four mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive categories: 1. *Non-demonstrators* – this is the reference category to which all the other categories will be contrasted and it comprises 49.8% of the adult population in Romania; 2. *Potential demonstrators* 40.8%; 3. *Previous demonstrators* 3.4%; 4. *2012 demonstrators* 6%.

What factors best predict individuals' belonging to a certain category of demonstrators? To answer this question, I examine the socio-political profile of the types of demonstrators by multivariate analysis. Multinomial logistic regression is a statistical technique suitable for this purpose as it highlights the characteristics that best distinguish the four types of demonstrators/non-demonstrators. The analysis included a complex statistical model with 25 predictors (independent variables) that can be broadly divided into four categories: relative deprivation, biographical availability/resources, mobilisation networks, political engagement and ideology (see Appendix for the measurement of variables included in analysis and descriptive statistics). Correlations between independent variables were weak, not posing multicollinearity issues.

A sequential multinomial logistic regression was performed through SPSS NOMREG to assess predictions in one of the four categories of the dependent variable (i.e. non-demonstrators, potential demonstrators, previous demonstrators, and 2012 demonstrators). The reference category is the *non-demonstrators*. I entered the 25 predictors in the analysis in three stages. First relative deprivation and biographical availability variables were included resulting in the partial model 1 (see model 1 in Table 1) which has produced a significant differentiation among the four groups of demonstrators/non-demonstrators [ $\chi^2(4245, N=1431) = 2660.68, p = 1$ , deviance criterion], the variance explained by the model being  $R^2$  (Nagelkerke) = 0.145. After the addition of 9 mobilisation network predictors (see model 2 in Table 1) the explained variance of the dependent variable increased to and  $R^2$  (Nagelkerke) = 0.253 [ $\chi^2(4206, N=1431) = 2511.74, p = 1$ , deviance criterion]. The final model (see model 3 in Table 1) also included the political engagement and ideology predictors and further significantly improved the differentiation between the four types of demonstrators/non-demonstrators  $R^2$  (Nagelkerke) = 0.340 [ $\chi^2(4182, N=1431) = 2366.16, p = 1$ , deviance criterion]. The full model (3) correctly classified 63.7% of all cases. *The non-demonstrators* were correctly identified in 77.1% of cases; *the potential demonstrators* were identified correctly in 58.6% of cases, *the previous demonstrators* in 6.5% of cases, and *the 2012 demonstrators* in 22.5% of cases. There was a tendency to incorrectly classify cases of the least numerous categories, to the largest categories (i.e. *the non-demonstrators* and *potential demonstrators*).

The 25 predictors have unequal individual effects on explaining the variance of the dependent variable. According to their impact on improving the prediction of belonging to one of the four types of demonstrators (details not shown here) the

best performing predictors were: political interest, previous participation in environmental demonstrations, place of residence, age, education, vote intention for USL (anti-austerity coalition), sex (male), membership in voluntary associations and political parties.

### **Findings: Who participated in the 2012 street demonstrations and who did not?**

Table 1 shows Exp (B) coefficients (odds ratios) of multinomial logistic regression models and statistical significance (in bold). The reference category of the dependent variable is *non-demonstrators*. Data presented in table 1 allow for an assessment of the differences between the relative effects of predictors belonging to various theoretical models. These differences will be discussed below, first as comparisons between each type of potential and actual demonstrators and the *non-demonstrators* and then by pointing out differences between *potential demonstrators*, *previous demonstrators* and *2012 demonstrators*, according to the 25 predictor-variables (see Appendix).

#### ***The potential demonstrators compared with the non-demonstrators***

Two grievance indicators differentiate people expressing willingness to protest from those who said they would never demonstrate (see Model 1 in Table 1). Thus, potential demonstrators are more likely than non-demonstrators to be worried about losing their job or not finding a job in the future. They are also more worried about government wiretapping or reading their personal mail or email, than non-demonstrators. In terms of resources and biographical availability, potential demonstrators are more likely to live in bigger urban settlements and tend to have lower household incomes but higher educational levels than non-demonstrators. These features imply that persons with a relatively precarious position on the job market might have higher levels of protest potential. On the other hand, pensioners tend to express lower levels of availability to join street demonstrations compared to employed persons. In terms of organizational ties, potential protesters tend to report membership in political parties, more often than non-demonstrators. They are also more cognitively engaged in politics, expressing higher interest in politics and a clear voting preference for a coalition of political parties (USL) that opposed the austerity measures adopted in Romania. Compared, with non-demonstrators, the potential demonstrators seem to hold more often post-materialist values measured

here by a preference for ‘giving people more say in government and protecting freedom of speech’ over ‘maintaining order and fighting rising prices’ (WWS, 2015). Overall, the features that seem to significantly differentiate potential demonstrators from non-demonstrators are the following: grievances related to their relatively precarious position on the job market, higher levels of education, ties to political parties, higher rates of interest in politics, anti-austerity voting preferences and post-materialist values. However, apart from ties to political parties the potential protesters do not seem notably well embedded into personal, employment or civil society related social networks.

### ***The previous demonstrators compared with the non-demonstrators***

None of our relative deprivation indicators significantly differentiates previous protesters from non-demonstrators. The two categories of respondents also tend have similar levels of household incomes. Thus, the lack of grievances might be one of the explanations for the previous demonstrators’ non-involvement in the 2012 demonstrations. In terms of biographical availability, previous demonstrators seem more likely to come from the above 50 years old age cohort and to report not having children. They also tend to have higher levels of education and to reside in bigger cities, compared to non-demonstrators. However, they seem to be disengaged from most of the organisational and personal ties that could have mobilised them to participate in the 2012 demonstrations. On the other hand, they tend to have higher levels of interest in politics and display post-materialist values. In terms of voting preferences, they were not supporters of the anti-austerity coalition (USL) as the potential and the 2012 demonstrators were. In general, the profile of previous demonstrators seems to fit quite well the features describing participants in ‘new social movements’: mainly urban, middle-class, highly educated persons having post-materialist orientations.

### ***The 2012 demonstrators compared with the non-demonstrators***

Compared with the non-demonstrators, the 2012 demonstrators tend to have lower household income. They are also more likely to be male, coming more from the above 50 years old age cohorts, than from the younger generations. Residence is an important predictor that differentiates demonstrators from non-demonstrators showing that the 2012 protesters were mainly persons living in bigger cities.



**Table 1: Multinomial Analysis of the Types of Demonstrators/Non-Demonstrators in Romania during the Economic Crisis**

Dependent variable - Types of demonstrators: 1. Non-demonstrators (reference category) 2. Potential demonstrators 3. Previous demonstrators 4. 2012 demonstrators	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators
Predictors included in the model	compared with Non-demonstrators			compared with Non-demonstrators			compared with Non-demonstrators		
Relative deprivation/Grievances									
Financial dissatisfaction	0.919	0.680	0.811	0.954	0.653	0.847	0.971	0.689	0.937
Worried about losing job or not finding a job	1.387*	1.678	1.204	1.177	1.577	1.003	1.120	1.553	0.918
Worried about government wiretapping or reading personal mail/email	1.394**	1.661	1.708*	1.359*	1.616	1.645	1.255	1.472	1.438
Biographical availability/Resources									
Household income	0.935*	1.009	0.988	0.921*	0.992	0.884	0.925*	1.019	0.861*
Male	1.317*	2.377**	3.082***	1.293*	2.217*	2.692***	1.089	1.791	2.213**
Age 18-29 vs. 50+	1.074	0.228*	0.177***	0.692	0.126**	0.037***	0.828	0.153*	0.045***
Age 30-49 vs. 50+	1.120	0.438*	0.617	0.807	0.394*	0.308**	0.855	0.385*	0.352**
Education (higher)	1.196***	1.354**	1.325***	1.142**	1.391**	1.105	1.115*	1.378**	1.083
Residence (bigger cities)	1.105***	1.150*	1.223***	1.108***	1.168*	1.252***	1.119***	1.163*	1.282***
Married or living with partner vs. single	0.868	1.741	0.565	0.982	2.317	0.638	0.892	2.058	0.473
Divorced, separated or widowed vs. single	0.531*	1.696	0.613	0.657	2.462	0.845	0.587	2.108	0.614
Children	1.063	0.413*	0.694	0.990	0.368*	0.467	1.014	0.394*	0.508
Mobilisation Networks									
Part-time or self-employed vs. full-time Employee				1.034	1.438	1.950	0.979	1.382	1.781
Retired vs. full-time employee				0.609*	1.276	0.688	0.535**	1.170	0.548
Housewife vs. full-time employee				1.202	2.449	0.750	1.128	2.257	0.720
Student vs. full-time employee				1.268	3.606	2.375	1.131	2.705	2.146
Unemployed vs. full-time employee				1.482	2.034	0.598	1.323	1.964	0.408
Public sector				1.401*	0.741	1.203	1.315	0.634	1.036
Member of trade union				1.356	1.307	1.448	1.411	1.345	1.768
Member of political party				2.446**	3.855**	4.177**	1.802*	2.425	2.994*
Member of voluntary association				1.052	1.072	2.334**	1.060	0.963	2.301**
Supervisor (at work)				0.936	1.259	1.900*	0.912	1.110	1.799*
Talks with friends and colleagues to obtain information				1.066	1.263	1.417**	1.025	1.256	1.347*

Dependent variable - Types of demonstrators: 1. Non-demonstrators (reference category) 2. Potential demonstrators 3. Previous demonstrators 4. 2012 demonstrators	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators	Potential demonstrators	Previous demonstrators	2012 Demonstrators
Predictors included in the model	compared with Non-demonstrators			compared with Non-demonstrators			compared with Non-demonstrators		
Uses PC frequently				1.162	0.976	1.574*	1.161	0.939	1.648*
Previous participation in environmental demonstrations				1.749*	3.232*	7.146***	1.571	2.561*	7.060***
Political engagement and ideology									
Political interest							1.720***	2.267***	1.899***
Vote for USL (anti-austerity coalition)							1.443*	0.964	2.150**
Democratic support							1.067	0.944	1.135
Trust political institutions							1.013	0.912	1.088
Left-Right Scale: Left vs. Centre							1.270	1.995	1.309
Left-Right Scale: Right vs. Centre							1.293	1.451	2.750**
Materialist vs. Post-materialists							0.537*	0.197**	0.743
Mixed-materialists vs. Post-materialists							0.576*	0.319*	0.617
-2 Log Likelihood	2660.685			2511.747			2366.168		
Nagelkerke R2	0.154			0.253			0.340		
	N=1431			N=1431			N=1431		

Data source: author's own elaboration based on WVS 2012.

Note: Data represent Exp (B) coefficients (odds ratios) of multinomial logistic regression models: values higher than 1 represent a positive effect, values below 1 represent a negative effect of a predictor variable on the dependent variable, controlling for the effect of all other variables included in the statistical model. Statistically significant coefficients in bold: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001. For nominal or ordinal predictors, the reference category's parameter is set to 0, because it is redundant. Example of reading data: *men*, compared to *women*, are over 3 times more likely (3.082) to have attended a demonstration in 2012, given the other variables in the model are held constant (see Model 1, column 3 for the 2012 demonstrators).

Marital status and having children do not seem to be linked with participation in the 2012 demonstrations. Part-time employees, students and the unemployed were not significantly more likely to demonstrate than full-time employees. Although directly affected by the 25% wage cuts and the reduction of employment benefits, public sector employees were not significantly more likely to attend demonstrations than private sector employees once we control for the effect of other variables. Trade union membership is not significantly associated with mobilization in these demonstrations.

On the other hand, embeddedness in various social and political networks seems to drive individuals to demonstrate. Thus, compared to non-demonstrators, the 2012 demonstrators are more likely to be members of political parties and civil society organisations, to supervise other people at work, having thus a leadership role in their network of contacts, to more frequently talk with their friends and colleagues to obtain information, to use personal computers frequently<sup>1</sup> and also use the internet, mobile phones and email daily to gather information about what is going on in their country and the world. Besides mobilisation networks that provide engagement opportunities and requests for participation, previous involvement in demonstrations for some environmental cause is also a strong predictor for attending demonstrations in 2012.

In terms of political engagement variables, participation in the 2012 demonstrators is positively associated with higher levels of interest in politics and vote intention for the anti-austerity coalition USL, which eventually won both the local and parliamentary elections of 2012. In terms of ideological orientations, the 2012 Romanian demonstrations might be different from the anti-austerity movements that were animated by leftist ideas in countries such as Spain, Portugal or Greece. Overall, our results point out that the 2012 Romanian demonstrators seem to be more on right side of the ideological spectrum, although street demonstrations were also joined by groups having leftist orientations (Stoica, 2012). While, both potential and previous demonstrators tend to hold post-materialist values, the 2012 demonstrators are not significantly different from non-

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<sup>1</sup> The variable 'frequency of using PC' very highly correlates (Pearson  $r=0.784$ ) with an additive index composed of variables measuring the frequency of using new information and communication technologies ICT (i.e. internet, mobile phones and email) to obtaining information. To avoid multicollinearity issues, only the variable 'frequency of using PC' was included in the logistic regression models although similar results have been obtained in separate analyses conducted with the ICT index (not shown here).

demonstrators in terms of post-materialist orientations. These findings point out the hybrid character of the 2012 demonstrations in terms ideological and value orientations.

### **Discussion: Protest mobilization in times of crisis**

In order to understand how people mobilised to demonstrate in the context of dire economic condition we view protest as a two-stage process in which first, economic grievances are politicised and turned into willingness to protest and second, willingness to protest is converted into actual protest mainly inside mobilising networks that provide both opportunities and requests for participation. Following and adapting Schussman and Soule's (2005) and Beyerlein, K. & Hipp's (2006) approaches, protest mobilisation is viewed as a multi-stage process in which certain factors predict willingness to protest while others predict actual protesting.

#### ***From discontent to protest potential: politicisation of grievances***

In the context of widespread economic hardships, one might expect grievance variables to play a key role in explaining protest involvement. However, as noted by social movement scholars, grievances do not lead automatically to protest. Instead, they require the framing of responsibility by mechanisms of politicisation (della Porta, 2014). In times of crisis and austerity, first citizens must feel the deterioration of macroeconomic and social conditions on their everyday life. Then through a process of politicisation they place much of the responsibility for the economic crisis and the inability to deal with it on the political leaders and institutions. Thus, the politicisation of grievances spreads political mistrust and creates a crisis of legitimacy which in turn fuels a motivational crisis manifested thorough the willingness to act. The target of action is singled out in the government and the regime and then mobilisation resources must be available to start protesting (della Porta 2014).

Overall, the individual level indicators of grievances and perceived injustice seem to perform better in explaining protest potential than actual protest involvement, illustrating thus the initial stage of protest mobilisation. In addition, once we control for the influence of political engagement and ideology variables, direct effects of grievances on protest potential become insignificant being thus mediated by political and motivational factors. This suggests that there is indeed a

political route in transforming economic grievances into willingness to protest and the key intervening factor seems to be the politicisation of grievances through a process of blame attribution targeting politicians and political institutions. Our findings show that individuals who are more interested in politics, those who are members of political parties and have a clear voting preference for opposition parties might be more willing to use demonstrations to express their grievances. This finding might be explained by the fact that politically engaged persons are more likely to be exposed to politicised protest discourse framed by social movements, opposition parties or the media which target collective action on the government and the regime. On the other hand, aggrieved people that are not exposed to politicisation framing and thus lack cognitive mobilisation seem more likely to become politically cynical and apathetic, as political disaffection theories would predict (Torcal & Montero, 2006). In addition to politicisation of grievances, biographical availability related to gender and age, as well as resources such as higher educational levels, or even more importantly, higher mobilisation opportunities derived from living in larger cities, all influence people's willingness to protest but also their actual engagement in protests.

### ***From protest potential to actual protesting: recruitment networks***

This analysis has shown some similarities but also some differences in the factors that predict protest potential and actual participation. The similarities relate mainly to biographical availability and political engagement variables while the differences pinpoint to recruitment networks. These differences might explain why some persons only expressed their willingness to protest while others have joined in the 2012 street demonstrations. An essential feature that sets apart the 2012 demonstrators is their embeddedness in various mobilisation networks. Civil society organisations, political parties and as well as politicised social networks of friends and colleagues in which political discussions take place frequently were important drivers of protest mobilisation in the 2012 demonstrations. The centrality of individuals in their social network also mattered, since those holding leadership positions at work were more prone to demonstrate. Along with these factors, the frequency of using personal computers and online means of communication and information (e.g. internet, email, mobile phones) is also positively associated with participation in the 2012 protests (Burean & Bădescu, 2014). Overall, potential demonstrators have comparable high levels of interest in politics as the 2012 demonstrators, but they seem to be disconnected from

the politicised networks that provided the mobilisation context leading to participation in the 2012 demonstrations.

Growing popular discontent during the economic crisis created mobilisation opportunities for various social actors, such as civil society organisations (CSOs) which engaged people in protests targeting broader issues (political corruption, environmental protection, urban planning, etc.). Even if the economic downturn could have imposed constraints in the funding resources of many of these organisations and networks, overall, membership in CSOs grew after 2008. As data from the WVS/EVS surveys point out, in Romania the share of respondents who reported membership in at least one CSO rose from 19% in 2008 to almost 30% in 2012. The share of political party joiners has also increased in the same period from 3.6% to 7.5%. These developments suggest an increased politicisation of certain segments of the population during the crisis, since civil society members and party joiners discuss political matters with friends more frequently and tend to consider politics as being more relevant to their life, than non-members (Tătar, 2015a).

The findings also suggest a persistent participation gap between men and women in terms of protest mobilisation. The effect of gender on protest mobilisation is to a certain degree mediated by political and ideological variables. But even after we control for the influence of these factors, men are over 2 times more likely to have participated in the 2012 demonstrations compared to women. Presumably, women are more prone to view participation in street demonstrations as a high risk activity. On the other hand, research on political participation in Romania has shown that women are as likely as men to participate in less contentious forms of protest such as petitioning (Tătar, 2011). Age is also a strong biographical predictor for attending demonstrations in 2012 but its effect goes in the contrary direction than expected. Demonstrators are more likely to be above 50, than in the 18-29 or 30-49 age cohorts. This finding may be linked with the fact that the massive demonstrations of early 2012 have been triggered by the government's intention to commodify healthcare public services that are particularly needed by the elderly.

### ***Beyond 'old' and 'new' social movements: the hybrid character of the 2012 demonstrations***

Our analysis has pointed out significant differences between previous protestors and the 2012 demonstrators. The previous demonstrators tend to have higher levels of income and education and are more likely to report post-materialist

value orientations. Plausible reasons for the non-involvement of the previous demonstrators in the 2012 protests seem to be their lack of support for the opposition parties (USL) on the one hand, and their disconnection from the recruitment networks that provided the mobilisation context for protest in 2012. Nevertheless, several mobilisation network variables did not play the anticipated role in predicting protest participation in the context of harsh economic conditions. For instance, membership in trade unions is not related to potential or actual involvement in demonstrations. Typically, unions specialize in strikes not in demonstrations as their main protest tactics. Moreover, in Romania participation in strikes is normally confined to full-time employed members of public sector trade unions (Tătar, 2015a). As our findings show, none of these categories were particularly active in the 2012 mobilisations, although public sector employees were directly affected by the 25% cutbacks in wages adopted along with the austerity package in 2010. Other potentially discontented categories, such as the unemployed or the students (Apăteanu and Tătar, 2017; Tătar and Apăteanu, 2019), were also not significantly more involved in these demonstrations than the general population. These findings further raise questions about the nature of the 2012 protest movements.

How do the Romanian 2012 demonstrations fit in the recent wave of European anti-austerity protest? Research suggests that the profile of protests in Romania has shifted in the last decades from old to new politics (Burean & Bădescu, 2014). During the communist period and in the 1990s, old materialist issues connected with worker strikes for higher wages and better jobs dominated the protest agenda. However, following a much earlier West European trend, the 2000s were marked in Romania by the emergence of new social movements of middle class, young, urban and highly educated citizens that mobilise through social networks for issues that are linked to the quality of democracy and life (Burean & Bădescu, 2014). In our sample, the group of previous demonstrators seem to conform to patterns of new social movements as they tend to display post-materialist values, have higher levels of education and middle household income. On the other hand, the 2012 demonstrators seem to be a mixture of old materialist politics and new post-materialist movements. Essentially, the 2012 demonstrations have had a hybrid nature, gathering a wide diversity of people. Some of them were having environmental concerns and high levels of computer literacy and intensively use online communication networks to obtain information. Yet others came from the lower income strata, from the older age cohorts and had average levels of education. Instead of singling out the re-emergence of old class conflicts, the lack of

significance of our employment and occupational status variables suggests that austerity measures led to the precarisation of broad parts of the population. Thus, none of the traditional categories (unemployed versus employed, public versus private sectors) stands out as particularly more mobilised to protest during the crisis. As della Porta (2015) notes, anti-austerity mobilisation that bridges together people from various precarious positions implies broad cross-generational and cross-class coalitions. The 2012 Romanian protests seem to illustrate this pattern.

## **Conclusion**

The 2012 demonstrations were the first significant mass protests in a series of major episodes of contention that recurrently emerged in Romania, in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Both the media and politicians often depicted the 2012 protests as spontaneous riots of the desperate and the marginalized. However, the findings presented in this article reveal a different picture. Demonstrators seem well embedded in existing social networks and civil society organisations. They frequently discuss political matters with friends or colleagues and often hold a leadership position in their network of contacts. They are neither the ‘strangers at the gates’ of institutional politics, as Tarrow (2012) suggests. On the contrary, many of these protesters have organisational ties with political parties and show a clear voting preference for anti-austerity parties. Overall, protesters seemed to be recruited from the socially active and politically engaged parts of the Romanian society.

To understand mobilisation in times of crisis we have used public opinion data to construct a typology of protestors. This allowed multiple comparisons, not only between those who demonstrate and those who do not, but also among potential and actual demonstrators, as well as between the 2012 demonstrators and previous demonstrators. Contrasting the profile of various types of people who stand at different stages of protest mobilisation enabled a sequential approach to analysing the recruitment process for the street demonstrations in 2012. Thus, protest mobilisation was viewed as a two-stage process that first entails turning discontent into willingness to attend demonstrations and then, converting willingness into actual protest. Various categories of factors such as grievances, resources, social networks, and cultural-motivational attitudes play different roles in predicting protest mobilisation at each stage. In the first stage, protest potential seems to be primarily driven by the interaction of a set of factors pertaining mainly to grievance and cultural-motivational



theories. Our findings suggest that economic grievances are transformed into willingness to protest through a process of politicisation in which much of the blame for the crisis and the inability to deal with it is placed on politicians and political institutions. However, politicisation processes are selective. Persons who are cognitively engaged in politics (in our data those who are more interested in politics, who are seeking political information and discuss politics frequently) are more likely to be exposed to politicised protest discourse. Social movements, opposition parties or the media produce and re-produce such protest frames that target protest action on the government or the regime. In the second stage of the mobilisation process, recruitment networks and organisational ties appear to play a key role in transforming willingness to demonstrate into actual protest. Comparing the profiles of potential protestors and the 2012 demonstrators reveals that civil society organisations, political parties and politicised online and offline social networks of friends and colleagues were important drivers of protest participation in the 2012 demonstrations.

Essentially, the early 2012 protests had a hybrid nature that transcends the dichotomy between 'old' and 'new' social movements. The wide diversity of people attending these protests suggests, as della Porta (2015) has observed in several other European anti-austerity movements, broad cross-generational and cross-class coalitions and solidarities. The mixed nature of the 2012 protestors was also facilitated by the relatively open and inclusive character of these demonstrations. During January-February 2012 people gathered daily for several weeks on the University Square in Bucharest and also on the main squares of other major cities of Romania. Public squares have become, in that period, open spaces in which anyone could have joined demonstrations to voice their discontent. Without having a clearly identifiable organisational core, the January-February 2012 protest demonstrations have been joined by diverse groups of people ranging from simply discontented individuals to NGO activists, nationalists, anti-capitalists, groups of the new right, ultras, monarchists, environmentalists and feminists (Stoiciu, 2013; Ana, 2017). What has united these diverse groups was the perceived source of popular discontent: ruling politicians and generally the corruption of the political class (Stoica, 2012). In this sense, the Romanian demonstrations of 2012 seem to fit more general patterns of anti-austerity protests spreading in the cities of the world in search for 'another democracy' that creates multiple public spaces in which citizens can make their voice heard (della Porta, 2012, p. 274).

More generally, protest demonstrations aim to impact the social and political

environment. But they also have individual effects on demonstrators themselves. Although the 2012 demonstrations have been doubtlessly also joined by ‘newcomers’ to protest politics, persons who had previous experience in protest participation (for environmental causes in our dataset) were 7 times more likely to attend the 2012 demonstrations, compared with individuals without prior protest experience. This finding suggests that previous involvement in protest movements might create an activist identity by socializing people into specific forms of collective action. Subsequently, the acquired repertoires of contention can be used by social movement activists in various contexts, and for totally different causes. Moreover, if demonstrations are successful in curbing policies and dismissing governments, this further encourages the use of protest as a strategic resource. This might clarify why, even if the economic crisis and austerity policies ended, protest episodes occur repeatedly and even intensify, as actually happened in Romania since 2012.

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### Appendix. The Measures

The empirical analysis in this article is based on survey data collected in Romania in 2012 as part of the sixth wave of the World Values Survey (WVS) 2010-2014. The WVS 2012 dataset comprises 1503 respondents and is representative for the Romanian adult population.

Variable/Index Name	Measures and descriptive statistics
<b>Dependent Variable</b>	
Types of demonstrators	1.Non-demonstrators (reference category) = 49.8%; 2.Potential demonstrators=40.8%; 3.Previous demonstrators=3.4%; 4. The 2012 demonstrators=6%.
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
<b>Grievance/relative deprivation indicators</b>	
Dissatisfaction with household financial situation	Yes=27.1% (tend to be completely dissatisfied) No=72.9%
Worried about losing job or not finding a job	Yes= 49.6% No=50.4%
Worried about government wire-tapping or reading my personal mail/email	Yes=44.9% No=55.1%
<b>Biographical availability/Resource</b>	
Household income (scale)	Mean=4.836, SD=2.130, Min=1, Max=10
Male	Yes=48.1%; No=51.9%
Age	'18-29'=21.2%; '30-49'=37.1%; '50+'=41.7%
Education (scale of highest level attained)	Mean=6.296; SD=1.880; Min=1; Max=9
Residence (scale of size of locality)	Mean=4.449; SD=2.240; Min=1; Max=8
Marital status	1.'Married or living with partner'=66%; 2.'Divorced, separated or widowed'=16.4%, 3.'Single'=17.6% (ref. cat.).
Having children	Yes=72%, No=28%
<b>Mobilisation Networks</b>	
Employment status	1.'Part time or self-employed'=7.9%; 2.'Retired/pensioned'=29.8%; 3.'Housewife not otherwise employed'=15.8%; 4.'Student'=5.3%; 5.'Unemployed'=5.8%; 6.'Full-time employee=35.4% (reference category).
Public sector employee	Yes=27.8%; No=72.2%
Member of trade union	Yes=8.3%; No=91.7%
Member of political party	Yes=7.5%; No=92.5%
Member of voluntary association	Yes=29.7%; No=70.3%
Supervisor (at work)	Yes=23.8%; No=76.2%
Talks with friends and colleagues to obtain information (scale)	Mean=4.081; SD=1.344; Min=1 (Never); Max=5 (Daily)

Variable/Index Name	Measures and descriptive statistics
Uses PC frequently (scale)	Mean=1.875; SD=0.909; Min=0; Max=3
Previous participation in environmental protests	Yes=9.2%; No=90.8%
Political engagement and ideology	
Political interest (scale)	Mean=2.146; SD=0.957; Min=1; Max=4
Vote intention for USL (anti-austerity coalition)	Yes=27.1%; No=72.9%
Democratic support (additive index)	Mean=5.984; SD=1.862; Min=0; Max=12
Trust in national political institutions (parliament, government, political parties)	Mean=5.206; SD=2.146; Min=3; Max=12
Left-Right self-identification (recoded)	'Left'=14.1%, 'Right'=19.1%, 'Centre'=66.8% (reference)
Post-materialism index	'Materialists'=29.9%; 'Mixed'=61.9%; 'Post-materialists'=8.2% (reference)